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CHALLENGE

FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM · LUCHE POR EL COMUNISMO · PLP

THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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STUDENTS WALK OUT AGAINST RACIST NEGLECT

Brooklyn, November 5—Over 50 mostly Black and Latin high school students walked out of their classes and staged an energetic protest in front of the John Jay Campus. They were protesting the racist conditions at the Secondary School for Journalism, one of five schools in the building. that were destroying their education and making it difficult for seniors to fulfill their graduation requirements. The students were fed up and they reached out to students at the other schools in the building and organized a walkout.

The New York City Department of Education (DOE) has mismanaged this struggling school for years. Principals have been rotated almost every year over the last 5 years. One year they even started the school year with no principal. The DOE tried to have the Secondary School for Law principal at the time keep Journalism afloat.

The students at this school have endured disaster after disaster and have had enough. They organized this walkout specifically protesting the current principal, Livingston Hilaire.

The latest complaint is an online learning curriculum called Summit Learning. Hilaire hastily forced this online learning website on his students without much thought or staff training. Now many students sit multiple periods per day staring at a computer screen. Many seniors are worried about graduation, as they are not enrolled in classes they need to meet the New York State Graduation Requirements. When students and parents complained to Hilaire, he basically responded with the standard top down response of "too bad this is what we are doing."

H.S Students shutting it down!

During the walkout students demanded Hilaire come outside to answer their demands he was nowhere to be found. Principal Hilaire is just a cog in the wheel of the racist system of education that capitalism has to offer the working class. Our youth deserve more than a dumbed down online learning curriculum that stymies their love of learning.Here is what some of the student protesters had to say:

— The walk out was an act of civil disobedience a walk for our right to receive a proper education. The principal of the Secondary School for Journalism failed to advocate for the students who were treated wrong. A majority of the seniors felt they were mistreated, and the principal did not help them stay

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OUR FIGHT

☆Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

☆The dictatorship of the working class — communism—can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

☆Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

☆While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

☆Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

☆Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

☆Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

☆Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

☆Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

☆Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

CHALLENGE is for the working class, produced by the working class. The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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Editorial

Only refuge from capitalism: communist revolution

As a migrant "caravan" makes its dangerous trek through Mexico, capitalist bosses worldwide continue to scapegoat immigrants for the failures of the profit system. With the dwindling group still hundreds of miles away from the nearest U.S. border, U.S. President Donald Trump threatened to send 15,000 or more troops with permission to shoot (Military Times, 11/1). Two weeks earlier, when the migrants approached Mexico from Guatemala, Mexican cops in riot gear greeted them with pepper spray. As they suffer from hunger, illness, and drenching downpours, these Central American refugees must also fend off the bosses' racism and rising fascism.

In his vicious effort to divide workers, Trump followed up with a threat to end birthright citizenship in the U.S. Though it's unlikely that the Racist-in-Chief will be able to deliver on this promise in the near future, the constant barrage of racist propaganda plays into the hands of all bosses. Whatever their internal disagreements, all capitalist rulers need to weaken working-class fightback. They all need super-profits from immigrant workers' labor. They all promote rotten nationalist ideas.

Workers unite

Who is in the caravan? In the runup to the November 6 midterm elections, Trump played to his racist base. He warned of an "invasion" by gang members and "criminals and unknown Middle Easterners"—a conflation of racist lies about Latin and Muslim workers. The reality is very different, as the Washington Post (10/23) observed:

> *Women push babies in strollers next to clusters of teenage boys. At night, small families sleep on the ground next to middle-aged men smoking cigarettes. One man walks with his 3-month-old puppy named Muñeca on a red leash…. A little girl carries a stuffed koala on her head. A pregnant woman stops to take a break in the shade. A young couple kisses after a rainstorm. A 6-month-old girl wears a yellow dress that reads, "Little baby dancer." A man wears a shirt he bought in Arizona, before being deported for the sixth time.*

In contrast to the bosses' relentless assault, the working class has rallied to the migrants' cause. Poor Mexican workers have donated food, water, clothing, blankets. Churches and recreation centers have offered shelter for sleep. Volunteer nurses are treating their blistered feet and respiratory infections. "The responsibility of feeding, clothing and sheltering several thousand migrants has been embraced by the small Mexican towns along the route, with residents jumping into charity mode as if they are responding to a natural disaster" (Washington Post, 10/26).

Workers around the world are supporting our immigrant sisters and brothers. In February, a 63-year-old restaurant owner in Bosnia and Herzegovina shut down his small business to provide 80,000 free meals to Syrian refugees. "They're people who are seeking refuge," he says. "They want to work; they want to provide for their families just like us" (Al Jazeera, 10/23).

Many workers understand that national borders benefit only the bosses and the profit system's exploitation. The working class has no borders!

Imperialism: root cause of mass migrations

The caravan originated in Honduras on October 13, and soon attracted other migrants—seeking safety in numbers—from El Salvador and Guatemala. It takes a lot to move people to leave their homes. In this case, as noted by Pueblos sin Fronteras, the group that organized the caravan, the push came from "decades of political, economic and military intervention by the United States and of negligence, coups d'état, insecurity, corruption and impunity by Central America's governments" (Politifact, 10/22).

In advanced finance capitalist nations, bosses are driven to expand beyond their borders to dominate markets, resources, and labor in other countries by force. This is what is known as imperialism, and it lies

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at the heart of the current crisis in Central America. The workers in this region have felt the imperialist boot on their neck for well over a century. In the absence of a mass working-class movement to challenge the blood-sucking imperialist bosses and the local rulers who sell out to them, the situation now is especially unbearable.

In 2009, a military coup in Honduras paved the way for the current fascist government of President Juan Orlando Hernández and skyrocketing murder and poverty rates. While U.S. President Barack Obama and his Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, refused to formally recognize the coup, they maintained the flow of hundreds of millions of dollars in U.S. military aid. To this day, several hundred U.S. troops remain stationed at Soto Cano Air Base, under the pretense of "fighting the drug war" and providing "humanitarian aid" (The Conversation, 10/25).

Meanwhile, the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), engineered by the U.S. bosses, has devastated economies and job prospects for workers in El Salvador and Guatemala. Since the passing of CAFTA in 2005, U.S. imports to Central America have increased by more than 80 percent, or nearly $15 billion dollars (Telesur, 3/1/16). This massive influx of U.S. agricultural goods has destroyed any chance of smaller domestic farmers to compete in the market. Millions of rural workers have been uprooted. They must migrate simply to survive.

Worldwide crisis of workers on the move

The migrant crisis isn't limited to the Americas. All over the world, workers are escaping imperialist-driven civil wars, racist persecution, indiscriminate violence, and economic exploitation. The number of refugee workers worldwide exceeds 68 million, roughly the population of France (UNHCR, 5/15).

Among those recently caught up in the bosses' lethal chaos are workers from Syria and West and Central Africa. The capitalist crisis has brought them to the doorstep of the European Union (EU). After initially "accepting" some of these workers, the European rulers quickly showed their racist colors. They essentially closed their borders while pressuring Middle Eastern and African countries to stop migrants en route (The Guardian, 7/7/17).

As the imperialist super-powers move toward a broader global conflict, and the global economic crisis intensifies, we can expect even more violent anti-immigrant racism. It will be up to the international working class—to fight back.

The fight of the workers has no racist borders!

The bosses' assaults against migrant workers is an attack on our entire class. The profit system survives through exploitation and racist, anti-worker violence and terror. It cannot be reformed; it must be destroyed! PLP calls on the international working class to build a communist movement to seize state power from the capitalists. We call on workers everywhere to organize to support our migrant sisters and brothers with food, shelter, and safety. And to soldiers in the U.S. military: Refuse all orders to shoot our sisters and brothers!

All workers have fundamental common interests that unite them. Only a communist revolution led by a mass, international Progressive Labor Party can end this capitalist nightmare. We call on all workers, from Central America to Syria, from South Sudan to China, to help us build this fight. Join Progressive Labor Party! We have a world to win✪

Newark workers show their mettle in fighting lead crisis!

NEWARK, NJ, November 7 Anger is beginning to rising inside the working class in Newark. For the second time in three years, Newark's students and working class residents are plagued by lead poisoning in their water. As in Flint, Michigan, Cleveland,and other cities with large Black populations, the contamination of drinking water exposes the racist nature of capitalism. And, since high levels of lead in drinking water are a threat to all students and workers, this disgraceful neglect reminds us that racism is poisonous for the entire working class.

The Progressive Labor Party demands that the bosses pay to guarantee clean drinking water. We also know that this is just one symptom of a racist capitalist system that will continue to damage the working class. Ultimately, we must smash capitalism with communist revolution if we want to ensure that future generations of workers have a society that looks after their needs, including having healthy drinking water and clean air.

Urban areas tend to have homes and water delivery systems built between the late 19th and the mid 20th centuries. Back then, lead was commonly used in piping, paint and gasoline. Major U.S. companies like DuPont and Standard Oil reaped billions in profits from lead-based products. Although lead has been known to be toxic for over 100 years, its use was not banned until the 1970s.

Newark city officials knew of the presence of lead in city water when 30 Newark schools were found to have elevated levels in 2016. In 2017, when homes were tested as well, it was revealed that 10 percent of those tested had lead at twice the level allowed under the Safe Water Drinking Act. Twenty percent of the homes were found to have levels of lead that max the federal limit. Children and pregnant women who drink water with these levels of lead are in danger of developing brain and nerve damage. Lead intake causes a host of other health problems (including high blood pressure) in both adults and children.

We have a basic right to drink clean water. But it's going to take a fight to get quick action and to guarantee that the Newark clean up is paid for by the wealthy corporations and not struggling workers.

Can't trust the politicians

After months of denying the existence of a problem, Newark Mayor Ras Baraka and his administration are now forced to admit that there is a lead crisis. But who's going to pay for the infrastructure repair? Not the companies that profited from selling toxic products like lead, and not the corporations currently getting billions in tax reductions. No, the politicians want working class residents, of Newark to pay the bill. We say hell no!

As the mid-term elections approached, the Democrats told us that they were our friends. However, this crisis shows that both [Democrats and Republicans] parties are part of the problem. The Baraka administration withheld information regarding the water contamination. It was only the current lawsuit brought by the Natural Resource Defense Council that forced them to admit there is a crisis. Current U.S Senators Bob Menendez and Cory Booker (the former Mayor, who is also responsible for the water crisis) voted to spend $700 billion on the military budget, but have not said a word on the current lead crisis in Newark. With friends like these, who needs enemies!

Transforming anger into action

Since the walkouts of 2015, many of the high school students in Newark have been relatively quiet. Yet this crisis has awakened some students to organize, talk to community members and create videos to expose the lead crisis. While it is still in the beginning stages, this gives us hope that the students can once again give leadership to a struggle that greatly affects their lives.

As a result of the lawsuit, Baraka is now being forced to hold town halls across the city about the water crisis. At one town hall a worker got up and asked Baraka why he continued to tell the city that the water was safe when they knew lead levels were rising. Another questioned why residents in the East Ward neighborhood were not given water filters when it was known that some homes had high lead levels. His only response was that the "data" is wrong. While Baraka is still able to get away with these responses, many are beginning to see through the illusion of Baraka as a "radically progressive" politician.

Only a worker-run society can meet our needs

The only way that working people can ensure that vital resources like water are safe is to run the world. Politicians spend billions on elections to convince us that only they can run things. And look at the results: low-wage jobs, racism and sexism, murderous wars, and unhealthy environment! Taking power from the capitalists and building communism will be a long struggle, but it will save hundreds of millions of lives. Join us in the fight!✪

Capitalism, a death sentence for mentally ill workers

NEW YORK CITY, November 5—People suffering from mental health need support. Instead, they are being killed by the cops, especially if they are Black or Latin. Communists and friends at a local church have organized a fightback against racist cop killings since the murder of Deborah Danner in the Bronx. On October 18, 2016. The forum "Fight for a Safe Response to People in Mental Crisis" built multiracial unity to fight racism and protect mentally ill workers and youth.

Build movement vs police murder of mentally ill

Back in January, along with other churches and organizations, we mobilized to pack the courtroom to demand that killer kop Hugh Barry be convicted of Danner's murder. Many expected a victory. Members of the Progressive Labor Party (PLP) pointed out how the whole proceeding was a racist sham. A number of our friends began to understand fascist "justice" better and gained deeper respect for our Party work when Barry walked free.

More and more of us see the need to link up with the families and friends of these victims to build a broad, ongoing movement to push back against police murder of those in mental crisis. We continued to work with a number of church people who had known Ms. Danner well and were not surprised that this atrocity had prompted Mayor de Blasio to form a "Crisis Prevention and Response Task Force" in the late spring following the sick farce of Barry's "prosecution"! Immediately we saw the need for a citywide response to build a campaign fundamentally to fundamentally change how people in mental crisis should be treated.

Over forty attended our forum, representing thirteen congregations or organizations, and all five boroughs. We heard from a victim's family, a psychologist on de-escalation techniques, a psychiatrist on what community services need to be funded, and a police reform activist. A member of Progressive Labor Party (PLP) blamed the entire capitalist system. As the imperialist powers compete around the world, fascism is growing and police killings are increasing.

We broke up into three work groups to develop our demands and plan strategy going forward. The bottom line is that no uniformed, weapon wielding cops should appear at any scene and provoke mentally compromised people into confrontation. Rather, the city must fund clinically trained first responders to be available round the clock in every neighborhood.

Racist police killings on the rise

Police kill at least 1,000 people throughout the U.S each year. Almost half are Black, Latin, or indigenous. Fully one fourth are suffering from a mental crisis (Vox, 5/30). This current Klan-in-blue murder rampage surpasses the many decades the KKK lynched "only" 50-60 victims per year (Berea College study). The ruling class promotes this kind of racist carnage to intimidate and control the working class from fighting back against sharpening racist and sexist exploitation.

In New York City many of us remember the murders of Eleanor Bumpers, Gidone Busch, and Mohamed Bah. In the past

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Student Walkout

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on track to graduate, refusing to give students classes they need in order to graduate.

— It was raining but that didn't stop the students fighting for what they believe. It wasn't organized but it was strong and loud and it was their fight for justice no matter the consequences they were fighting for something they believe in.

— The walkout was great! It takes so much courage to go against your school and fight for your rights and I'm extremely happy that the kids from journalism did so. When close to no teachers are defending you it can easily get discouraging but as a school we stuck together and showed that although there are five different schools in one building, an injustice to one is an injustice to all. We rallied outside of the school for around 45 minutes calling for change. Some kids were threatened with suspension and other disciplinary actions but made the decision that fighting for the right to an education was much more important. After the kids raised their complaints with principal Hilaire, they were told if they were to do the walkout no other school would advocate for you because they don't care about you. With this, the students were infuriated and told everyone else in the building. As a collective, we all supported journalism in their fight for justice!

As these students rallied in the rain they chanted "Summit will plummet" and "How do you spell racist? DOE" and "Hilaire come out" and "We are not cowards"

Youth leaders in the fight against racism

When one of the students returned to class, the teacher asked why they had walked out. After hearing what was happening at Journalism and why many students were supporting the students there, the teacher said "And that's why I'm not even mad." Then the other students also asked a lot of questions. This was at Park Slope Collegiate where there has been a lot of struggle against racism and segregation. And the teachers at Park Slope Collegiate fight hard and work hard for their students. We need more of that. Students, teachers and parents uniting to fight for an anti-racist education and also an anti-racist world. That would be communism.✪

Workers outraged at PetroCaribe and Gov't robbery

HAITI, October 17—Large cities and small villages alike were quiet today. Nothing moved, except millions of workers and students and their angry shouts against the corruption of the capitalist government in the Petrocaribe scandal (see box).In one small provincial town the leadership of progressove labor party (PLP) organized a mass response of between 1500, and 2000 people.

Today's demonstrations were held on the anniversary of the assassination of Jean Jacques Dessalines, one of the leaders of the Haitian fight for independence from French colonialism and slavery. Workers and students, young and old, marched resolutely against the outrages of the profit system, which has reduced the working class here and around the world to unrelenting poverty and war.

Overflowing with red energy

Many were initially hesitant to participate because of outright threats made by the police, of violence against marchers. But little by little they gained confidence and the march began to swell; by the time it reached the main road, the crowd was huge and animated, overflowing with energy. We weren't walking any more, we were running.This was the result of days of mobilization by comrades in the streets with megaphone in hand, on social networks, and talking to friends and acquaintances with every opportunity.

The fight against the corruption is part of our struggle, because corruption is the fruit of the capitalist system, and the corruptors are and have always been the ruling class and their bought-an-paid-for politicians. During the summer, the PLP here studied dialectical materialism. We learned that we must arm ourselves and the masses of workers and studentwith the tools to evaluate our reality, and what we can do to change that reality. We are committed to continuing to fight back against the abuses and exploitation of the capitalist system, to building a strong base in the working class, studying and implementing the line of PLP. Fight for communism, power to the working class!✪

What is the PetroCaribe Scandal?

PetroCaribe is a Venezuelan-led oil alliance between countries,and Venezuela to purchase oil on preferential payment. It was a capitalist scheme created under the Hugo Chavez presidency in 2005 to gain imperialist influence in the U.S.'s backyard. The following is from Miami Herald (12/1/17):

Over a dozen former government officials and heads of private firms of were accused ofembezzling $2 billion in Venezuelan oil loans — money that could have helped the country rebuild after its devastating earthquake in 2010.The nearly $2 billion that was paid out came from the country's Venezuelan oil largess, known as PetroCaribe. It provides Haiti and several other cash-strapped Caribbean countries with subsidized oil on favorable financing terms. The debt is stretched over a 25-year period with a 1 percent interest rate and a two- to three-year grace period allowing the countries to use the savings to finance social and economic projects.

Mexico: Indigenous workers fight mining bosses

OAXACA, November 6—In response to the inability of the government to comply with its obligations and to provide justice, indigenous workers of Oaxaca submitted the state and mining companies to a popular community trial. The Progressive Labor Party has initiated a participation plan within the movements that convened this trial. We want to show that only through a communist revolution can we end the attacks against the workers, the environment and the indigenous workers here.

The brutal process of looting through mining, human exploitation and destruction of nature started 500 years ago with the arrival of Hernan Cortés and other mass murderers sent by the Spanish Catholic monarchs Isabel and Fernando to Mesoamerica, now Mexico. The bosses teach us that this was all in the past and that we currently live in an independent, democratic, progressive and wonderful country.

What has been happening in Mexico particularly in Oaxaca, shows the hypocrisy of the neoliberal governments and their accomplices of the fake left in the bosses' parties of Institutional Reveloutionary Party(PRI), National Action Party (PAN), and so on.

Recently, the Assembly of the Central Valleys against Mining has been organized to fight in defense of the Earth; it is made up of 30 peasant communities. It denounced the fact that a total of 322 mining concessions have been granted in Oaxaca that cover some 160 thousand hectares of gold, silver, copper, zinc and molybdenum in the process of being extracted. Authorities, citizens and organizations of the native peoples of the region declared that for a decade their territories were granted to foreign mining companies without prior consultation, as stipulated in Convention 169 of the International Labor Organization (ILO).

Oaxaca is the entity with the largest number of mining projects in the country; all of them are operated by foreign companies according to an academic study conducted by the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM).

The Mezinal Atlas prepared by academics and experts of the University Program of Studies of Cultural Diversity and Interculturality of UNAM, states that most of these projects are financed by Canadian, U.S and British companies. Of the 13 projects destined for Oaxaca, most will operate in the Valles Centrales Region, very close to Oaxaca, the capital city. This amount surpasses Sonora, the Mexican state considered to have the greatest boost to mining in the country, in which a total of 11 projects are developed.

The foreign companies involved in mining exploitation in Oaxacan territory are: Gold Resources Corporation (United States), Hochschild Mining Plc / Hochschild Group (England), Lake Shore Gold Corp (Canada), Fortuna Silver Inc. (Canada), Sundance Minerals (Canada) and Arco Resources Corp (Canada).

Some mines and neighborhoods where precious minerals are extracted are: Mina Yautepec, from San Bartolo Yautepec, Tlacolula; Minas Altagracia and El Aguila, San Pedro Totolápan, Tlacolula; Cobre Grande, San Dionisio Ocotepec, Tlacolula; Mina Natividad, Ixtlán de Juárez; Tres Hermanas, Zimatlán de Alvarez; Mina El Fuego, Santiago Lachiguiri, Isthmus of Tehuantepec; The King, San Jerónimo Tlacochauaya; The Margaritas, San Pedro Totolápan.

These imperialist companies not only continue to steal the natural resources of the indigenous workers, but they also continue to superexploit the poor peasants and slaughter them; they also destroy the ecology by poisoning the earth, water, air, flora and fauna.

Fighting back against exploitation

Last October, the Popular Community Trial Against the State and Mining Companies convened by the Central Valleys Assembly against Mining was held, in which social and civil organizations, indigenous peasants, and human rights defenders of the territory and of natural resources, and national and foreign social activists all participated. There was also representation from the teachers of Section 22 of Oaxaca CNTE-SNTE. In this event, the consequences and atrocities of the mining exploitation were denounced and condemned. This destruction are a product of the economic ambitions of foreign businessmen and the capitalist government of Mexico. Photographs of deformed fetuses, children with skin infections, adult men and women with cancer, etc. were presented.

The Encounter of Peoples in Defense of Land and Territory has been formed with organizations, collectives and activists to fight and reject foreign businessmen. However, the State, through its repressive apparatus, has responded with repression and death. Five militants of the Committee for the Defense of Indigenous Rights (CODEDI) of the Sierra Zapotec South have been murdered for defending the beaches and their territory; they were murdered by hired assassins, police and the same army and navy that keep them under siege.

The Unified Front of Trade Unions and National Organizations (FUSION) also plays a role in these struggles. We have participated in some of their activities.

Unity is our weapon, CHALLENGE is our tool

As militants of the Progressive Labor Party (PLP), we have initiated a participation plan within these movements to fight together; our main purpose will be the construction of the revolutionary communist party using our newspaper CHALLENGE, as our organizational and ideological tool for the destruction of this murderous capitalist system and the establishment of communism.

Communism will mean that the working class will govern to meet our needs without having to exploit the workers. Since we will be the ones who will organize all production, there will be neither imperialist capitalists nor their national partners who are interested only in profits and preparations for their next wars. These concepts and much more are what communists can contribute to these mass movements. To victory!✪

Students map global imperialism; rev up transit campaign

BROOKLYN, October 30—At today's Progressive Labor Party study a group of Kingsborough Community College students and faculty, dozens of sharp questions were raised in this multiracial gathering of women and men, trying understand the world from a communist perspective and to making plans and change it. Our topic today was 'Imperialism and fascism,' part of a regular series on different topics, as well as evaluating our progress and giving leadership to the ongoing anti racist struggles at KCC.

Mapping imperialist rivalry

The aspect of the study group that generated the most discussion involved a large map of the world, and mapping out the current U.S., Chinese, Russian and regional imperialist rivalries.

For example, the students from Yemen noted that while the U.S. is involved in bombing both Syria and Yemen, the U.S. media only talks about Syria when it makes the U.S. look good and Russia look bad. Yemen—with thirteen million workers (five million of them children) at imminent risk of death by starvation—is one of the biggest capitalist disasters today.

Even from the partial truths the capitalist media cherry picks for us to see, it can all seems very confusing. One of the struggles we had in this study group was clearly connecting the big imperialist states like the U.S. and Russia with their rival "junior partners," Saudi Arabia and Iran. Unlike the early capitalist colonial empires of Britain, Belgium, Spain, France and others, the U.S., Russian and Chinese imperialists do not plant their flags over entire continents and say "this is ours! Everyone here is a colonial subject!"

Instead, the capitalist class of today finds local bosses in these countries to support, or, if necessary, fund "proxy wars" and fund local capitalist-led armies to fight on their behalf. One famous example discussed was the U.S.' creation and funding of the mujahideen terrorists like Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan in the 1980s. These were their proxies for fighting Russia, who eventually turned on their U.S. masters.

Global politics are local...

Kingsborough students, staff and faculty have learned an enormous amount about how the college and capitalism actually function by organizing to fight, and the fightback has raised increasing questions about the capitalist system. We're told we live in a "democracy" with "rights." But when students and faculty mobilize against racist administrators like Michael Goldstein, why are the racists protected, and two dozen faculty threatened with legal action?

The latest anti-racist struggle on campus is a petition to the MTA to improve the utterly atrocious public transportation service to our campus. This petition campaign was developed and launched by students active in several clubs and supported by KCC's student government. It's already reached almost one 1,000 students, and will reach thousands more by the end of the semester. Why is public transportation so poor that hundreds of students are forced, every day, to stuff themselves into unsafe buses?

Here we talked about the relationship between sharpening imperialist rivalry and growing fascism. Fascism is when the capitalists of a country are weakened and unstable, they resort primarily to rule by force.Democratic illusions weaken, the working class gets fewer crumbs, more violence like racist police terror and worsening living conditions. And as the capitalist class disciplines its own inner factions, so will they attempt to further, and "discipline" us with more racist terror and nationalist politics, in order to prepare us for war.

...and local politics can go global

What the bosses fear most is an organized working class with antiracist and communist politics. Some of the young women who led and were involved in the fight against racist Michael Goldstein put it best: "Everyone knew about this racism, but no one wanted to talk about it or do anything about it because they were scared. We decided we had to."

Another said, "That fight needed to happen. We're a school of international and immigrant students. The struggle gave us unity and we wouldn't have that unity if we didn't start fighting. Now people are talking. The real enemy isn't Trump or Goldstein, and they need to go, but it's really the billionaires behind the closed doors whose names you don't know and never read about who allow it."

Everyone agreed to meet again in two weeks for our next discussion. We also agreed to hear more reports on the situation of students, faculty and workers, and discuss how we can coordinate and give sharper leadership.

We may seem a long way from revolution at the moment,but more and more workers and youth are reading CHALLENGE, thinking about communism and learning how to organize and fight. One young PL student, while being new to the Party, is already learning how to build communist leadership among other students. And all of us are learning to stick together, stick it out, and to figure out how to fight back no matter what. With a slowly but surely growing movement like this, we can't lose.✪

Gun forum: Capitalism behind the trigger

BROOKLYN, November 7—"When our public school friends walked out to demonstrate against school gun violence the organizers of the rally we went to did not want to let us speak. We took the mike and spoke anyway." This was said by one of the two public high school students who took part in a nation-wide school walkout last spring. They came to take part in a panel at a church forum about gun violence, particularly in schools and affecting youth. Quite by coincidence the date of the forum was the Saturday of the synagogue murders in Pittsburgh. The forum began with a moment of silence for this horror caused by racism and anti-Semitism as well as the shooting of two Black residents of Kentucky earlier in the week.

Fighting back against gun violence with multiracial unity

One young adult from the church was on the panel and spoke about the need to organize and educate together to solve the problems of gun control. Other panelists were a speaker from Sandy Hook Promise – a reform group that is working to end gun violence in schools, and an African American woman who was a prosecutor working on crimes against youth. She is now special counsel to a prominent political office holder in our city. The Sandy Hook Promise woman promoted normal reform solutions such as voting, while the former prosecutor believed grass roots organizing was a viable solution as well.

There was a teacher who took their lead from the students in supporting their walkout and encouraging multiracial unity and fightback as the way to effect the most change today. A question from the audience regarding the systemic nature of gun violence brought the opportunity for revolutionary politics to be injected. There was struggle on the panel after the students pushed back on voting as the only viable solution and encouraged multiracial unity and fight back as other ways to make their voices heard.

While the forum only had sixteen participants, there was some good discussion on different aspects of the issue. The opening statement recounted a story related to the church by minister of Brown Memorial Baptist. His father's generation were contacted by the National Rifle Association so that southern Blacks could arm themselves against the Klan and other racist groups in the late 1940s and 1950s. As time went on hedge funds started supporting the NRA turned them to maximize profits and advocate for repealing gun control laws and stoking fears to sell guns.

When asked about the systemic nature of gun violence, one of the speakers stated that capitalism's drive for profit is the basis for the sale of all guns. A student connected the racist fears magnified by U.S. capitalism to keeping people divided and working class victories weak. A person from the audience spoke passionately about the how the flintlock rifles and pistols that were available when the second amendment was created cannot compare to the high-powered weapons of war sold today.

Revolutionary violence vs Capitalist terror

We collected contact information and promoted upcoming programs, as well as information on the Sandy Hook Promise group. Our original vision was to create a plan of action during the last part of this forum. The moderator asked for suggestions, but instead people in the audience spoke, and spoke well. One man described ongoing struggles against police killings of mentally ill people, and another about a multi faith coalition being formed to motivate congregations into mobilizing on issues of social justice. A plan of action to protest the NRA and organize a rally with other groups who attended the forum was discussed. Our social justice group at the church will pursue that.

The Progressive Labor Party is part of these actions. With our friends in this struggle, we work to a) connect the root of gun violence to alienation and the profit-drive under capitalism, and b) fight for the outlook that we can use working-class revolutionary violence as a means for an international communist revolution.✪

Mental Illness

Continued from page 3

three years, however the pace of these killings has tragically picked up with 13 victims dead, all but one Black or Latin (Washington Post, 10/1). Indeed, no working class family is safe. Who among us does not know someone we love who has in one way or another suffered from permenant or temporary psychosis by addiction, stress of life under capitalism, or untreated mental illness.

Expose bosses' phony commissions

Each of these abominable killings has been met with a mass, outraged response demanding justice. Only the family of Mohamed Bah has finally prevailed in a civil suit. But now NYC's racist mayor is appealing this judgment to establish that any cop who still "reasonably" believes he/she is in danger may execute a victim, even as he lies already gravely wounded on the floor.

At our forum, one of the involved clergy has challenged us to form a "Shadow Task Force" to counter DeBlasio's phony task force. It would continually monitor where the actual deliberations are leading and put forward our demands in every way possible. A more recent proposal is to organize a news conference at City Hall in November to sharpen the fight. As communists we must expose the fake "caring" facade of deBlasio and of all liberal politicians who set up task forces and commissions as safety valves to divert and coopt struggle. As we fight for a safer New York City for the mentally ill, we must also fight for a better world for the entire working class. That's communism. Join the struggle!✪

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

In awe of workers fightback

On October 19th I attended a tremendous dinner celebrating the momentous victory by the tenants of 83-85 Bowery in New York City against slumlord Joseph Betesh. Feasting alongside a multiracial group of 600 guests, we enjoyed various artistic performances, comical karaoke, inspiring speeches, and a video briefly documenting the span of this struggle.

I became involved in this struggle about a year ago, supporting a comrade in her mass work with the organization, Youth Against Displacement. My first contact was at a planning meeting, not long after these tenants had been suddenly evicted in the middle of the night, with the reality sinking in that they would most likely be spending Chinese New Year in a homeless shelter. Despite a language barrier, I could feel the militant fire in their voices, some of them elderly, some of them holding toddlers.

Watching the video gave me flashbacks to their first hunger strike in front of the Housing Preservation Department held for several days in the rain and freezing cold. I remember feeling horrified as a high ranking police official forced us to undo the mock shelter we had made using the barricades, deeming such use of city property as "criminal." In the following months, the tenants' personal belongings were thrown from their apartments into giant dumpsters. I must admit I felt increasingly hopeless about this situation. But these tenants never lost their resolve. They held another hunger strike, along with numerous demonstrations, garnering mass media attention and working-class support. By the end of the summer, I remember being brought to tears of joy upon hearing the news that the vacate notice had been lifted.

I was overcome by a similar feeling of joy at this celebration, reminded of the overwhelming potential within an organized, multi-racial, militant, mass working-class movement. Organizations and individuals from all over New York City attended, showing the unifying potential of organizing around the issue of displacement, which is afterall imperialism on a local scale. I was also inspired by the words of YAD organizers who recognized that, although this battle ended in victory, the war is not won.

Inwood, Washington Heights, East Harlem, South Bronx – these are just a few neighborhoods struggling with displacement due to racist rezoning. I left this celebration further emboldened to help expand YAD's work, and to continue to push the Party's revolutionary line among its already highly-developed members.

★★★★★

Los Angeles: movie nights promotes a communist lens

For our study groups we have been watching films and discussing them. In October we watched *Escape From Sobibor* in honor of the 75th anniversary of the escape. This movie is about the most successful escape of Jewish workers from a Nazi death camp. When Soviet prisoners are brought to the camp, the civilians enlist their help to plan an escape for everyone. This struggle gives us some keys to fighting fascism: secrecy, trust in the working class, and discipline. It also showed a side of the fight against the Nazis that is not popularly portrayed, the Jewish resistance. Capitalist culture tells us that Jewish workers went to concentration camps and death camps without a fight. They also tell us that the U.S. and Great Britain liberated Europe from the Nazis when in reality the Soviet Union defeated the Nazis.

In November, we watched *Sorry to Bother You* (reviewed previously in CHALLENGE). Some of us had seen it during the summer but many comrades had not. Key points of Progressive Labor Party's line were illuminated in the movie: black workers are key to revolution, the importance of organizing on the job, and multi-racial unity. We also discussed the role of art under capitalism and why this movie was filmed and released now, as opposed to when it was written six years ago. Some critics said it was a critique of the U.S under president Donald Trump even though the screenplay was originally written during former president Barack Obama's second term as a general critique of

capitalism.

These films inspire discussions of capitalism, communism, how to change the world, and how to create more culture that promotes our communist values.

★★★★★

The case against a human rights approach

Recently I have been to three events about fighting murderous injustices, which were focused on human rights. Two of these meetings were about Israeli abuses in Palestine and one was about the murder of journalists who report on repressive regimes.Since World War 2 there have been numerous international covenants of this nature, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights from the UN, and treaties such as the International Bill of Human Rights, and many others related to protection of particular groups such as children. There is no enforcement except by voluntary agreement of nations or through the UN Security Council, which requires that the major rival powers agree. The International Criminal Court, which is independent from the UN, has never brought cases against war criminals from the major imperialist nations. Its cases have focused largely on crimes in formerly colonized African states, such as in Rwanda, or on a defeated Bosnian Serb General in Yugoslavia.

So fundamentally, what is wrong with the human rights approach to problem solving is that it ignores the matter of power. No state goes before a legal adjudicator, in good faith anyway, to ask permission to go to war or to murder its own citizens. The Israeli occupation of Palestine was declared illegal decades ago; the right of the occupied to resist is clear in international law. But none of that has stopped the Israelis from oppressing and murdering Palestinians or receiving massive aid from the US. Nations that murder opposition journalists also have little to fear, as seen with the continued support of Saudi Arabia by the US.

These meetings would be better focused on how to build mass movements against genocide and war, how to build international ties among workers, and how eventually to overthrow the murderous capitalist regimes that commit these crimes. It is an illusion to think that laws made and enforced by the perpetrators, or that voting to choose between perpetrators can bring peace or justice to the world.At one of these meetings that focused on Palestine, I was able to give a full discussion of the above point of view. I not only got some applause, but about half the audience took the paper.

★★★★★

Workers tired of exploitation and false promises

A few days ago I participated in a public hearing of workers who work in restaurants as waiters, food delivery to offices and homes and those that work in nail salons. At the hearing, several people spoke who are involved in a campaign to have the New York governor sign a law so that these workers get the New York State minimum wage without it affecting the tips that these workers earn when serving their customers. These workers are super-exploited because the salary they receive is not enough to cover their needs in a city where life is becoming more costly through the constant rise of rents, high cost of transportation, food, medical care, etc. and in the majority of times, the tips these workers receive does not cover the minimum wage that at this time is $13.00 an hour.

There was very little discussion because the workers were tired of the politicians' promises made to them only when they were thought of to win them votes. The workers know that the politicians will in no way resolve the ever rising costs of the basic necessities of the working class; that, under capitalism, the workers' needs will never, ever be met.

When it was my turn to speak, I told them that we could not lose time on this campaign now that the government is advancing their fascist agenda on the entire working class which is facing more and more attacks; that it's not just hearings that will workers resolve their problems.

We have to get out in the streets and fight back. Then maybe in the short-run, these super-exploited workers might have the possibility of having a decent life with the approval of a law that will benefit them.Then again, no reforms or laws will resolve the problems facing the working class, not just in the United States, but the entire world. Only with a communist revolution will the world's workers' needs be met.

At the end, many workers approached to thank me for what I said.

★★★★★

Read Johnny got his gun

Many thanks for the fine articles on both the Bolshevik revolution and World War I in the November 7 edition of the CHALLENGE. Communists during World War I called for the defeat of their "own" nation's armies, in the spirit of proletarian internationalism.This bold declaration is contained in the ending of Dalton Trumbo's incredible antiwar novel, *Johnny Got His Gun*. The protagonist—who lies in a hospital bed, his limbs, face, and ears shot off during trench warfare—and ponders who his real enemy is:

> *We will use the guns you force upon us, we will use them to defend our very lives, and the menace to our lives does not lie on the other side of a nomansland that was set apart without our consent it lies within our own boundaries here…. Give us the slogans and we will turn them into realities. Sing the battle hymns and we will take them up where you left off. Not one, not ten, not ten thousand, not a million, not ten millions, not a hundred millions but a billion, two billions of us all—the people of the world…. We will be alive and we will walk and talk and eat and sing and laugh and feel and love and bear our children in tranquility, in security, in decency, in peace. You plan the wars, you masters of men—plan the wars and point the way and we will point the gun.*

As the world once again is beset by nationalism and moving ever closer to war, Trumbo's novel should be read (or reread) by us all.

★★★★★

No work or wealth without workers

As workers, it is very difficult to think about our own position within the economic order, especially because when we say goodbye to the production line where our strength, time, discipline, and submission are required, we move into the other line of traffic lights, tin plates, and mandatory stops. In the best of cases this other line functions like the factory line, which requires us to make use of patience and time, over which we less and less have control of. We have been lied to: How many times have we been told that there is a lack of work because there is a lack of money? As if money created jobs and not the other way around.

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Letter

No work or wealth without workers

Continued from page 6

As if it were the worker who needs money to exist as a worker; and it is not money that needs the worker to reproduce. Through this reasoning it could be said that construction workers needs houses so that they can exist as workers and employees, and it is not the houses that need the worker to exist and enrich a few. How could we continue to believe such a lie? when we are the ones who create this wealth with our very lives! (With our death!)We know that these houses will be exchanged for money,which will serve to enrich the ones who control the capital. We will be stripped of the large wealth that we have produced, staying in the hands of a few, perhaps those few who have lied to us. Although there are differences in pay scale, the payment will never allow us to reproduce ourselves. They have not given us time to ask ourselves why if we create the wealth with our work it's only in a few hands, while we are forced to juggle and maneuver with the minimum that is alloted to us?

They steal our time and our wages. The work we do is seen as independent of us, there is a disconnect between the work and the worker, and that is why our creations are respected ,more than the workers that create them. This facilitates the appropriation of our work, and also of the workers lives!

The trick is to make it seem that the one who pays for our time, pays only for a job. While the worker is left in limbo, an indeterminate place, excluded from their work. We may see this as a consequence of the division of labor that goes to the extremes of dividing labor on one side and workers on the other. The truth is that there is no work without workers, and without workers there is no possiblity for profit.

The work we do as workers is not paid for, it is not returned to us, it is squeezed out and we are given crumbs in exchange for our lives. Now I remember that a few months ago during a meeting in the workplace, chaired by the general manager, he congratulated, thanked and dismissed a worker who had "given 30 years of his life" to the company. That worker who is over 60 years of age, announced during his farewell speech "it was nice working with you, now I am going to enjoy life".
Some will say this is the way things are, that it is not right, but what can we do but continue in this great madness? As if this were part of a natural order and you had to resign yourself to keep being broken down. We do not see this as a natural order, but a structure, a social organization, a system that robs us and leads us to believe that it's just, natural, and inescapable. And what can we say?

What can we do before the flagrant theft bosses systematically execute us, justifying themselves with supposedly fair laws? What will we do as workers? What brings us together is on the other side of big capital, we feed it with our blood,sweat, and tears. How much longer do we wait for a worker's revolution?

Long live international brigades!

Continued from page 8

for nothing. But yes, it must be said, they did want a post in battle, they aspired to the honor of dying for us. Banners of Spain! Salute these heroes! Be lowered to honor these martyrs!Speak to your children. Tell them of the International Brigade Recount for them how, coming over seas and mountains, crossing frontiers bristling with bayonets, sought by raving dogs thirsting to tear their flesh, they reached our country as crusaders for freedom, to fight and die for Spain's liberty and independence threatened by German and Italian fascism. They gave up everything - their loves, their countries, homes, fathers, mothers, wives, brothers, sisters and children - and they came and said to us: "We are here. Your cause, Spain's cause, is ours."

Today many are departing. Thousands remain, shrouded in Spanish earth. Comrades of the International Brigades: political reasons, reasons of state, the welfare of that very cause for which you offered your blood with boundless generosity, are sending you back, some to your own countries, and others to forced exile. You can go proudly. You are history. You are legend.

We shall not forget you. And when the olive tree of peace is in flower, entwined with the victory laurels of the Republic of Spain - return!

Return to our side, for here you will find a homeland. Those who have no country or friends, who must live deprived of friendship - all, all will have the affection and gratitude of the Spanish people who today and tomorrow will shout with enthusiasm:

LONG LIVE THE HEROES
OF THE INTERNATIONAL BRIGADES!✪

RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly, LAT=Los Angeles Times

Bosses' cause widespread miscarriage

NYT, 10/22 — [In a] windowless warehouse near Tennessee's border with Mississippi….hundreds of…women lift and drag boxes weighing up to 45 pounds….There is no air conditioning…. Temperatures…rise past 100 degrees. Workers often faint….
Thousands of…public records [have] involved workers who…had suffered miscarriages, gone into premature labor, or in one case, had a stillborn baby after their employers rejected their pleas for assistance — a break from flipping heavy mattresses, lugging large boxes and pushing loaded carts.They worked at a hospital, a post office, an airport, a grocery store, a prison, a fire department, a pharmaceutical company and several hotels
….Under federal law, companies do not necessarily have to adjust pregnant women's jobs, even when lighter work is available and their doctors send letters urging a reprieve….Companies that do not give anyone a break have no obligation to do so for pregnant women….That is how the warehouse's…owner XPO Logistics, operates... Tasha Murrell told her boss she was pregnant and asked to leave work early one day…because lifting had become painful...Her supervisor told her to get an abortion.....

Capitalist Qatar, world's richest country, enslaves immigrant workers

GW, 11/2 — The Marsa Malaz Kempinski hotel….even by the standards of the richest country in the world,…oozes excess….lined with Ferraris and Rolls-Royces….The royal suite goes for more than $15,000 a night….

However, life is very different for those who guard the cars, clean the rooms and manicure the lawns. They come from some of the poorest parts of the world — south Asia, east and west Africa and the Philippines — but have paid large recruitment fees…to work here….leav[ing] workers vulnerable to debt bondage and forced labor….including salaries below the minimum wage….

Rafiq says he has tended lawns…for three years, but he has not paid off the debt he incurred to reach Qatar…[He] handed over $4,000 as a fee to the agent….but at the airport he was given a contract…[for] a salary amounting to half of what he was originally promised….

The hotel's security guards…[are] working 50% more hours than…signed up for….Some say they get just four to five hours sleep a night.

Remembering the Rockefeller slaughter of the Attica uprising

NYT, 11/1 (obituary) — Phylis Skloot Bamberger…sued to protect inmates from… "barbarous abuse" by guards in the wake of the 1971 Attica uprising….The prisoners [suffered] ongoing "physical abuse, torture, beatings and other forms of brutality"….endured at Attica, about 37 miles east of Buffalo.The prison [uprising] left…33 inmates dead after [Gov. Rockefeller]…ordered the State Police to storm the prison on Sept. 13, 1971, in what one prosecutor…branded a "turkey shoot…."

…Ms. Bamberger…presented…evidence [of]… "beatings of inmates who were confined to stretchers, burning of some with matches and forcing others to run naked through gauntlets of guards armed with clubs".

How Jim Crow implanted racism for more than a century after the Civil War

NYT, 11/2 — "Black Citizenship in the Age of Jim Crow," an exhibition about Reconstruction and its aftermath at the New-York Historical Society….

This…period….was also a story of incredible strides backward….

…A set of shackles presented with the initially puzzling date of 1866….had been used to keep Mary Horn, a 17-year-old, in captivity in Georgia even after the 13th amendment abolished slavery in late 1865….

Black Americans exercising the rights of citizenship…prompted immediate and furious push-back. A robe from the first Ku Klux Klan, dating from around 1866, is shown alongside a…note to David Jeems, a black Republican who was elected sheriff…in 1868, suggesting he switch to the Democratic Party, crowing the slogan "No Negro Equality!"….But the rollback…and the creation of Jim Crow…arrived…through many actions at all levels over decades….like the 1898 coup against the interracial government in Wilmington, N.C., where armed white Democratic mobs burned down the town's black newspaper, killed black and white Republican supporters and installed one of their own as mayor….The show chronicles the many ways African-Americans…resisted Jim Crow…. The post-Civil War growth of the prison system prompts association with today's analogy of mass incarceration as "the new Jim Crow…."

Google this: $90 million exit bonus for sexual misconduct

NYT, 10/27 — …An outpouring from Google employees [followed]…reporting how the company had paid millions of dollars in exit packages to male executives accused of misconduct and stayed silent about their transgressions. In the case of Andy Rubin…the company gave him a $90 million exit package….Some executives accused of harassment were paid millions of dollars even as the company was fending off lawsuits from former employees…that claimed it underpaid women….

Other employees said they tried to calculate how many hours of their work would have gone toward generating the $90 million that Mr. Rubin obtained in his exit package.

Ethiopia enslaves women workers

NYT, 10/26 — Ethiopia…suffers from large gender disparities according to a United Nations study.

Women are more prone to disease than men… and although half of the country's labor force is made up of women, a majority of them are unpaid because most work as farm laborers.

80th anniversary

LONG LIVE THE INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE!

October 28, 2018 is the 80th anniversary of one of the greatest examples of working class internationalism in history—the departure of the International Brigades from the Spanish Civil War. The Spanish Civil War lasted from 1936 to 1939. The War was, along with fascist Japan's invasion of China in 1931, the true beginning of World War II.

Prelude to world war

Many working class students of history may know about the Paris Commune, and the 1905 and 1917 revolutions in Russia. The history of workers' fightback in Spain, since at least 1875, is somehting else to behold. It's a proud history, and also a tragic one

The Spanish Civil War was a fight to the death of Spain's capitalist Second Republic, 1931-39. In the first quarter of the twentieth century, Spain's ruling class had changed little in thinking and in custom since the fifteenth century, when the monarchy of Ferdinand and Isabella began pillaging the Western hemisphere. The workers and peasants had had enough!

From "Spain's October" to Popular Front

In 1934, Communist and left-socialist-led miners in northern Spain revolted against the fascist party's election into the Republic. This heroic, short-lived "Soviet Republic" was crushed by the army, under the leadership of a fascist general named Francisco Franco.

The Communist Party (PCE), the largest and strongest party in Spain, then entered into an electoral "Popular Front" coalition with the Socialist Party. (For PLP's analysis and critique of this period, read "*Lessons of People's War in Spain.*")

In 1936, the Popular Front was narrowly elected into power. Months later, the Republic was attacked by a revolt of its own army, led by General Franco, and now supported by Hitlerite Germany and Fascist Italy.

Long live the international brigades

Despite the political weaknesses of the old communist movement, especially abandoning revolution and allying with so-called "lesser evil" capitalists, a testament to the old movement's strength and commitment to our class is how they organized millions of workers to aid the Spanish Republic under fascist invasion. In a message to José Diaz, leader of the PCE, Soviet leader Joseph Stalin called the Spanish Civil War "not solely the cause of the Spaniards, but the cause of all progressive and advanced humanity." This was a testament to the old movements strength and commitment to our class.The major "democratic" capitalist powers, especially the U.S. under FDR, declared "neutrality" while openly selling weapons, trucks and fuel on credit to fascist Franco, Germany, and Italy.

The international working class, however, answered the workers of Spain's call. 32,000 workers, most of them Communists, came to Spain from 37 countries to fight fascism in special divisions of the new worker-led Spanish army: the International Brigades. The worker-led Soviet Union sent as many shiploads of military aid as they could, despite a Nazi submarine blockade of the Spanish coast.

Despite being gravely outnumbered and outgunned, and having no professional training as soldiers, the Brigades were thrust into action immediately and helped achieve the seemingly impossible- the successful defense of Madrid, from November 1-21, 1936.

The Brigades played a decisive role in every major battle of the war until the capitalist Republican government ordered the Brigades to leave in October, 1938, in a desperate attempt to placate the capitalist powers. The Republic fell to the fascists in March, 1939.

Many were put into concentration camps. The war killed one million workers, of which 400,000 were captured and executed, and 500,000 fled Spain. Thousands of Brigaders fought the fascists again in World War II; thousands others became antifascist partisans led by communists in France, Yugoslavia and elsewhere. Some made it to the Soviet Union and joined the Red Army, where their experiences helped give leadership to the Eastern Front- especially in helping break the Nazi siege of Leningrad in 1944.

Dolores Ibárruri, known as "La Pasionaria," a leading Spanish communist, addressed the departing Internationals after their parade down "Las Ramblas" boulevard in Barcelona. It was 80 years ago, today.

Excerpts from La Pasionaria's farewell address

Barcelona, October 28, 1938

It is very difficult to say a few words in farewell to the heroes of the International Brigades, because of what they are and what they represent. A feeling of sorrow, sorrow for those who are going away, exiles from their countries, persecuted by the tyrants of all peoples - and grief for those who will stay here forever mingled with the Spanish soil.

From all peoples, from all races, you came to us. And in the hardest days of the war, when the capital of the Spanish Republic was threatened, it was you, gallant comrades of the International Brigades, who helped save the city with your fighting enthusiasm, your heroism and your spirit of sacrifice. And Jarama and Guadalajara, Brunete and Belchite, Levante and the Ebro, in immortal verses sing of the courage, the sacrifice, the daring, the discipline of the International Brigades.

They gave us everything - their youth or their maturity; their science or their experience; their blood and their lives; their hopes and aspirations - and they asked us

Continued on page 7

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